

## CONDITIONS & TRENDS

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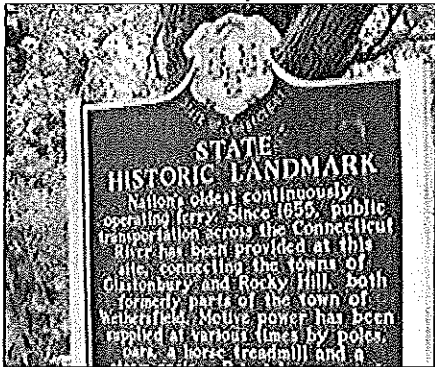
### Overview

This booklet provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Rocky Hill. It has been prepared as part of the process of preparing the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development.

*"If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could then better judge what to do and how to do it."*

Abraham Lincoln,  
American President

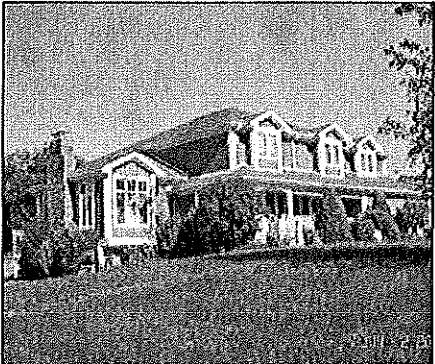
History



People



Housing



Economy



## Shipbuilding

In the 1700s, Rocky Hill became a place for building of ships for passage upstream. During the Revolutionary War, the General Assembly requisitioned a large vessel to be to be built and outfitted in Stepney Parish as an armed vessel to engage the British.

Being selected to build this vessel was a source of enormous pride for residents and this vessel, the "Minerva", became the basis for the Town logo many years later.



Even though Rocky Hill is no longer known as a port or maritime center, this era in its history lives on.

## History of Rocky Hill

While the geologic history of many areas is often forgotten, the discovery of dinosaur bones in Rocky Hill in 1966 serves as a reminder of the prehistoric origins of this area.

Native Americans are believed to have lived in this area for the last 10,000 years or so although there is no written record of their culture.

Europeans "discovered" this part of New England in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed up what we now call the Connecticut River. Dutch and British trade with Native Americans eventually led to settlement of Wethersfield after 1634. As population grew, settlers moved southwards from Wethersfield into what we now call Rocky Hill by around 1650. A separate parish was formed around 1722 so that residents of this area did not have to travel to Wethersfield for religious services. In 1843, residents received permission from the General Assembly to establish a separate municipality.

While farming was the main economic activity for many years, this area did enjoy a period as a major port. Due to the shifting course of the Connecticut River, it was not always possible for larger ships to navigate past this point and a port was established here to transfer goods to smaller vessels to complete the journey to areas upstream. Shipbuilding was also established. The maritime role of this area eroded over time as a result of the dredging of the Connecticut River after 1810, the improvement of the overall road system, and the introduction of the railroad in the late 1800s.

The arrival of trolley service around 1910 began the transformation of Rocky Hill to a suburban community. While growth was slow at first, it accelerated over time with the proliferation of the automobile and the expansion of the highway system. The Silas Deane Highway was one of the first "bypass roads" built in Connecticut to address congestion in Wethersfield and Rocky Hill.

The post-World War II desire for suburban living coupled with the establishment of the interstate highway system accelerated suburban growth. In the twenty years from 1960 to 1980, Rocky Hill's population almost doubled and the overall pattern of the community became established.

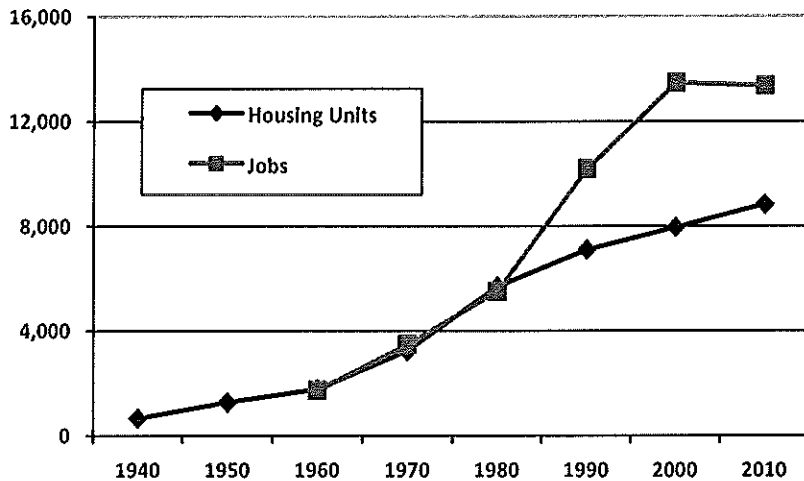
***Due to its strategic location and transportation access, it is considered likely that Rocky Hill will continue to be sought out by new residents and businesses.***

## Regional Roles and Implications

Rocky Hill continues to serve two regional roles.

Rocky Hill is, first and foremost, a residential suburb within the Hartford metropolitan region. The community has over 19,000 residents and almost 9,000 housing units. Most of the land area in the community is zoned, used and planned for residential use.

However, Rocky Hill also serves as a regional employment center. As shown in the chart on this page, Rocky Hill has, since 1980, had more jobs located in the community than housing units. In other words, Rocky Hill is also a job “exporter” to a larger region due to the companies and organizations located here.



Overall, Rocky Hill is a diverse and balanced community that provides employment opportunities and housing opportunities. These roles are supported by Rocky Hill’s strategic location on Interstate 91.

***Future growth (both residential and business) is expected to continue due to Rocky Hill’s convenient location and overall amenities.***

## Rocky Hill's Population

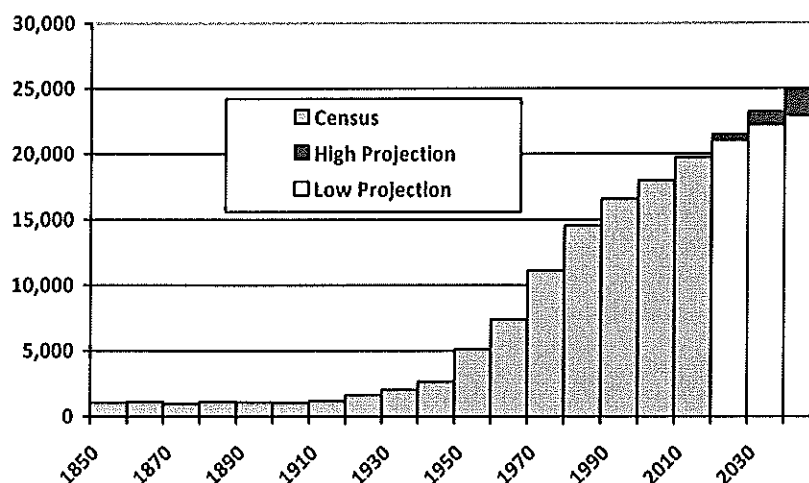
|      |               |
|------|---------------|
| 1850 | 1,042         |
| 1860 | 1,102         |
| 1870 | 971           |
| 1880 | 1,108         |
| 1890 | 1,069         |
| 1900 | 1,026         |
| 1910 | 1,187         |
| 1920 | 1,633         |
| 1930 | 2,021         |
| 1940 | 2,679         |
| 1950 | 5,108         |
| 1960 | 7,404         |
| 1970 | 11,103        |
| 1980 | 14,559        |
| 1990 | 16,554        |
| 2000 | 17,966        |
| 2010 | 19,709        |
| 2020 | 21,012 21,452 |
| 2030 | 22,180 23,195 |
| 2030 | 22,901 24,938 |

US Census data for 1850 to 2010. Projections are in italics. Low projections are based on Planimetrics cohort survival model. High projections based on continued 1990-2000 trend.

## People Of Rocky Hill

According to the Census, Rocky Hill had a year 2010 population of 19,709 persons. This represents an increase of 1,743 persons from the 17,966 persons reported in the 2000 Census. The chart shows Rocky Hill population growth since the 1850 Census with a range of population projections to the year 2040. Population growth is expected to continue although land availability and the timing thereof may affect these projections.

Rocky Hill's Population (1850 – 2040)



## Dynamics of Population Change

Most growth which occurred in Rocky Hill from 1950 to 2010 was due to net immigration. While natural increase (births minus deaths) has historically supplemented this growth, a recent decline in births and an uptick in deaths resulted in a natural decrease in the last decade.

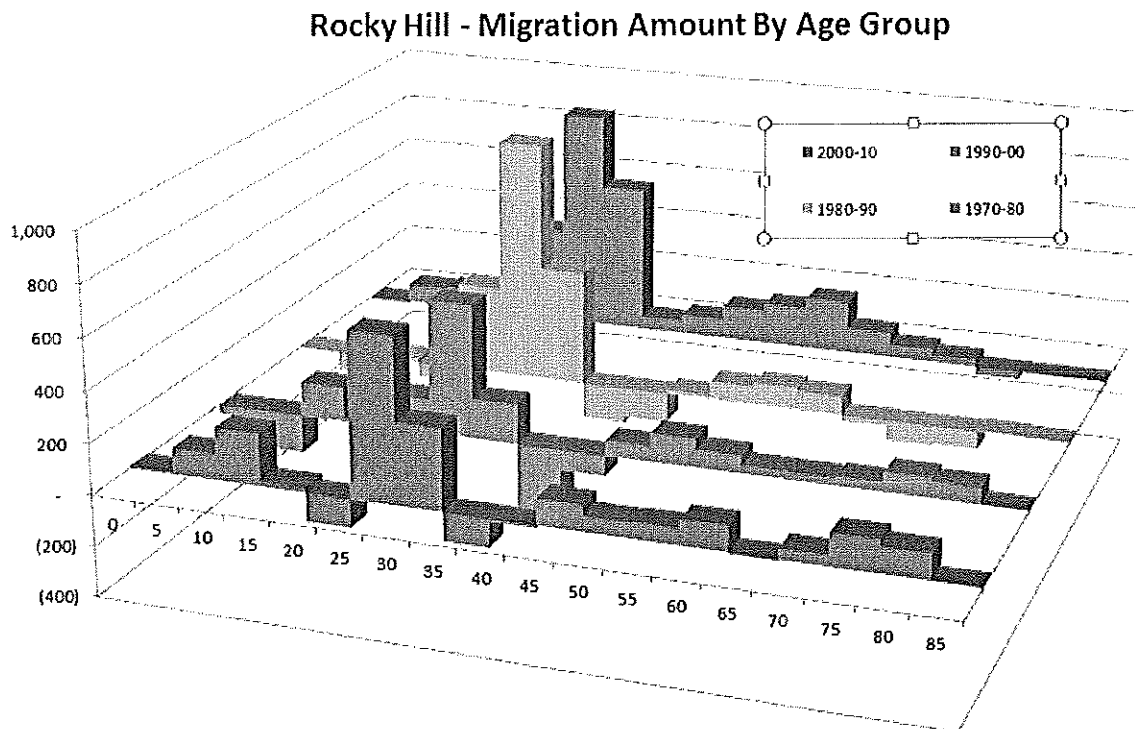
Components of Population Change

|                                       | 1950s         | 1960s         | 1970s         | 1980s         | 1990s         | 2000s         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Total Change</b>                   | <b>+2,296</b> | <b>+3,699</b> | <b>+3,456</b> | <b>+1,995</b> | <b>+1,412</b> | <b>+1,743</b> |
| <b>Change Due To Natural Increase</b> | <b>770</b>    | <b>812</b>    | <b>526</b>    | <b>538</b>    | <b>229</b>    | <b>(507)</b>  |
| Births                                | 1,153         | 1,350         | 1,480         | 1,804         | 2,085         | 1,617         |
| Deaths                                | 383           | 538           | 954           | 1,266         | 1,856         | 2,124         |
| <b>Change Due To Net Migration</b>    | <b>1,526</b>  | <b>2,887</b>  | <b>2,930</b>  | <b>1,457</b>  | <b>1,183</b>  | <b>2,250</b>  |

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

By comparing the number of people in one age group in the Census to the number of people 10 years younger in the prior Census (10 years earlier), the dynamics of migration in Rocky Hill can be evaluated.

Since at least 1970, as can be seen from the following chart, Rocky Hill has been attracting young adults (ages 20 to 35). For the last two decades, Rocky Hill has been attracting older adults (ages 65 and over) also. Both of these age groups may be seeking rental or condominium living with maintenance provided in a convenient location.



Even within this overall pattern, there is considerable migration within the Rocky Hill population. The potential impact from migration in Rocky Hill may best be appreciated by considering the following:

- about 35 percent of the housing units are renter occupied where occupancy can change frequently, and
- 55 percent of all households in Rocky Hill in 2010 had moved to their residence since 2000.

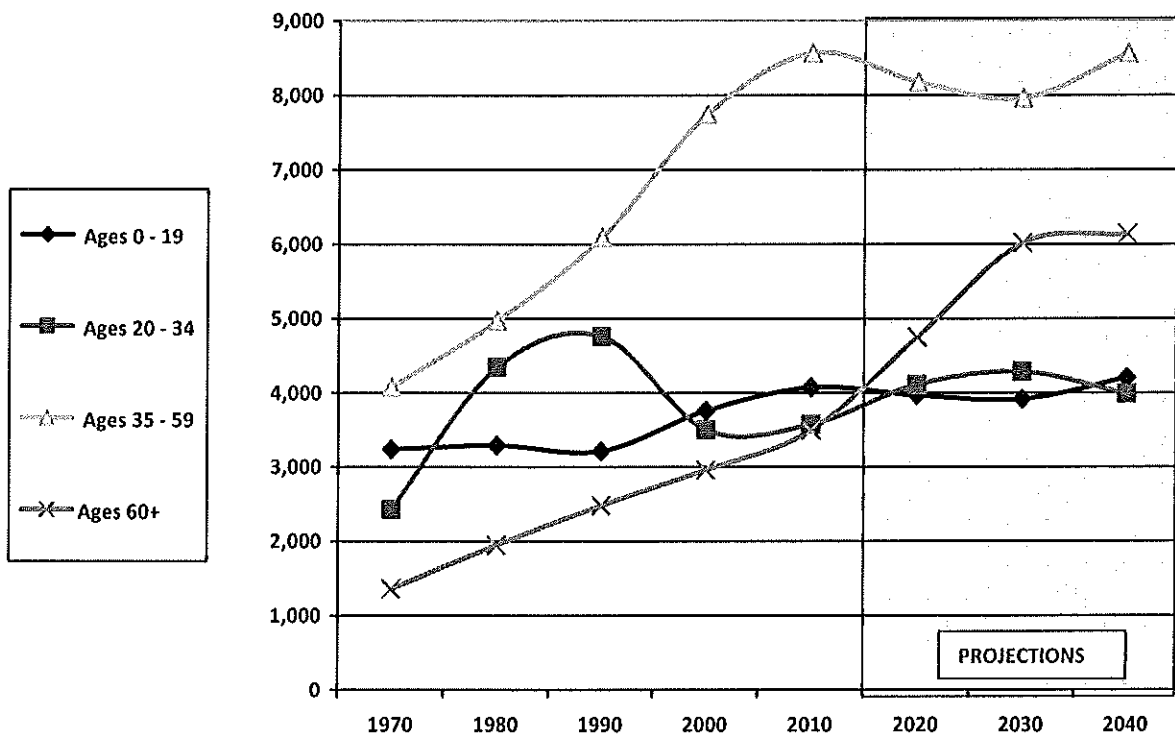
***Rocky Hill has been attracting younger adults (ages 20 to 35) and older adults (ages 65+) due to its housing mix, location, and amenities.***

## Age Composition

The following chart looks at Rocky Hill's historic and projected population composition for the period from 1970 to 2040.

The most significant past trend is the increase in persons aged 35 to 59. This primarily reflects the aging of the "baby boomers" (people born between about 1945 and 1965). The population in these age groups roughly doubled from 1970 through to 2010.

The most significant future trend is the projected increase in persons aged 60 and over. This is also a reflection of the aging of the "baby boomers". The population in these age groups is expected to roughly double in the next 30 years or so.



A changing age composition can also result in a changing demand for municipal and housing types. Of course, it must be remembered that these are projections and variations can occur, especially further into the future.

For planning purposes, a community's age composition might be broken down into age groups which reflect differing needs. If population projections bear out (birth, death, and migration patterns continue), the need for different community programs can be evaluated.

The major demographic element in Rocky Hill's future is expected to be the growth in the number of older residents. This is occurring nation-wide and is a reflection of the aging of the "baby boom" and the longer life expectancies.

| Description    | Age Range   | Needs   | Projection To 2040                 |
|----------------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Infant         | 0 to 4      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child care</li> <li>Recreation programs</li> </ul>                             | Lower by 2010 then higher by 2040  |
| School-Age     | 5 to 19     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School facilities</li> <li>Recreation programs</li> </ul>                      | Lower by 2030 then higher by 2040  |
| Young Adults   | 20 to 34    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental housing</li> <li>Starter homes</li> <li>Social opportunities</li> </ul> | Higher by 2030 then lower by 2040  |
| Middle Age     | 35 to 54    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family programs</li> <li>Trade-up homes</li> </ul>                             | Lower to 2020 then higher by 2040  |
| Mature Adults  | 55 to 64    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller homes</li> <li>Second homes</li> </ul>                                 | Higher by 2020 then steady to 2040 |
| Retirement Age | 65 and over | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing options</li> <li>Elderly programs</li> </ul>                           | Higher through to 2040             |

Rocky Hill Population History & Projections by Age Groups

| Ages  | Actual |        |        |        |        | Projections |        |        |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|
|       | 1970   | 1980   | 1990   | 2000   | 2010   | 2020        | 2030   | 2040   |
| 0-4   | 779    | 725    | 952    | 917    | 924    | 880         | 951    | 1,013  |
| 5-19  | 2,458  | 2,567  | 2,263  | 2,841  | 3,150  | 3,089       | 2,966  | 3,191  |
| 20-34 | 2,424  | 4,347  | 4,764  | 3,503  | 3,573  | 4,110       | 4,285  | 3,991  |
| 35-54 | 2,829  | 3,171  | 4,535  | 6,000  | 5,668  | 4,980       | 5,412  | 6,050  |
| 55-64 | 1,250  | 1,801  | 1,560  | 1,747  | 2,901  | 3,201       | 2,549  | 2,515  |
| 65 +  | 1,363  | 1,948  | 2,480  | 2,958  | 3,493  | 4,752       | 6,016  | 6,140  |
| Total | 11,103 | 14,559 | 16,554 | 17,966 | 19,709 | 21,012      | 22,180 | 22,901 |

1970-10 Census, Projections by Planimetrics.

***The growth in the older age groups will be the most significant demographic trend in Rocky Hill over the next few decades.***

#### Housing Units

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1960 | 1,788 |
| 1970 | 3,236 |
| 1980 | 5,692 |
| 1990 | 7,107 |
| 2000 | 7,962 |
| 2010 | 8,843 |

US Census.

#### Percent Multi-Family

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Rocky Hill   | 39% |
| State        | 35% |
| Wethersfield | 22% |
| Newington    | 24% |
| Glastonbury  | 17% |
| Berlin       | 16% |
| Cromwell     | 29% |

2010 Census

#### Housing Tenure

|        | Rocky Hill | State |
|--------|------------|-------|
| Owner  | 66%        | 68%   |
| Renter | 34%        | 32%   |

2010 Census

#### Housing Occupancy

|            | Rocky Hill | State |
|------------|------------|-------|
| 1-2 people | 66%        | 60%   |
| 3-4 people | 28%        | 31%   |
| 5+ people  | 6%         | 9%    |
| Median     | 2.28       | 2.52  |

2010 Census

#### 'Affordable Housing'

|            |        |
|------------|--------|
| Rocky Hill | 5.02%  |
| State      | 11.26% |

CT Department of Housing (2014)

## Housing In Rocky Hill

Rocky Hill had about 8,843 housing units in 2010. While Rocky Hill added an average of about 176 housing units per year between 1960 and 1990, growth has been much slower (about 85 units per year) in the last 20 years as the amount of developable land shrinks and land becomes more difficult to develop.

Rocky Hill has a diverse housing stock with many apartments and condominiums. In 2010, the percentage of multi-family units was higher in Rocky Hill (39 percent) than the State average (35 percent) and surrounding towns (16 percent to 29 percent). In addition, the percentage of renter occupied units was higher in Rocky Hill (34 percent) than the State average (32 percent).

In terms of the composition of its housing stock, Rocky Hill is one of the most diverse communities in the region and the State. Due to the housing mix and the level of renter occupancy, Rocky Hill has a more "migratory" population than other communities.

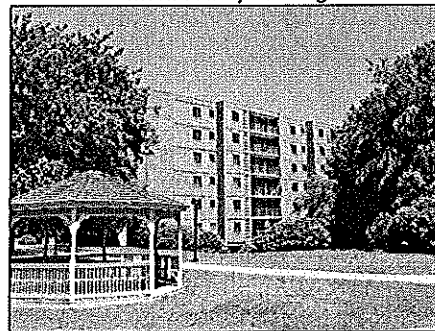
It is interesting to note that about two of every three housing units in Rocky Hill are occupied by one or two people. While this can reflect "empty nesters" (adults whose children have moved out), it is also a product of the in-migration of young single and married persons ages 20 to 35.

In addition, about five percent of the housing units in Rocky Hill are considered "affordable housing" (assisted housing, financed by CHFA mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed). This is a higher percentage than many other suburban communities around the State, however it is considerably lower than the State average.

Single-Family House



Multi-Family Building



***Rocky Hill Has a diverse housing stock ...***



## Economic Conditions in Rocky Hill

As previously indicated, Rocky Hill is a regional economic and employment center.

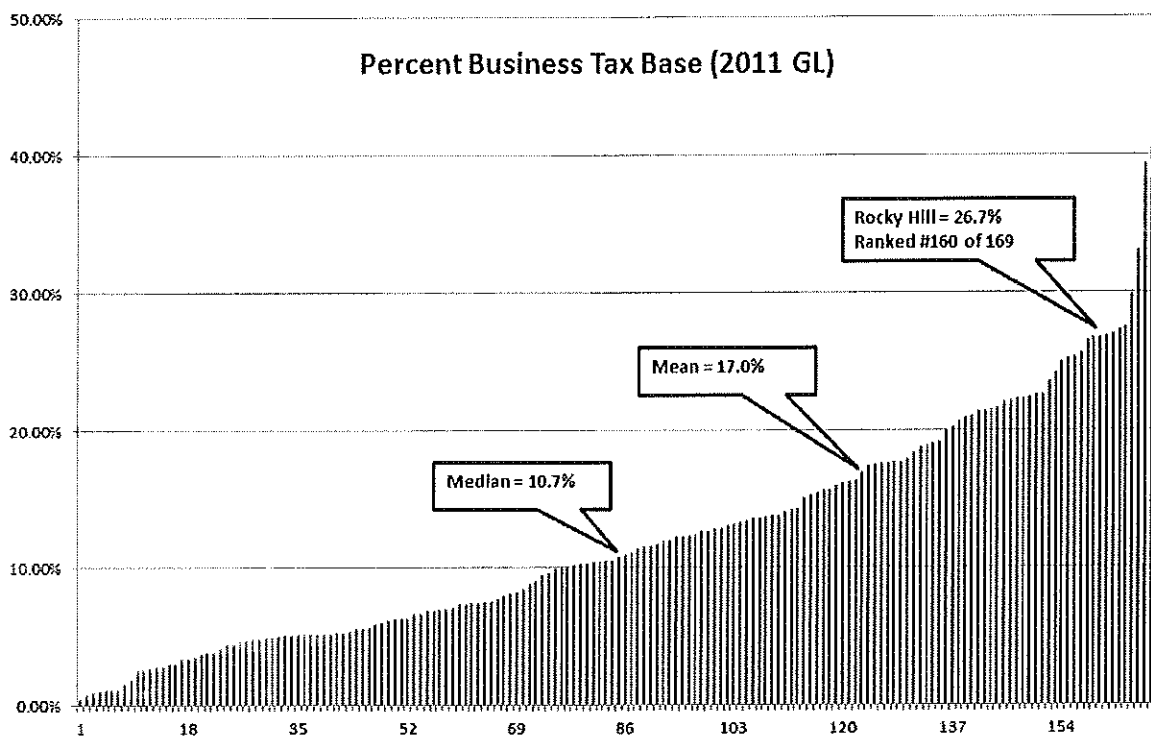
The number of jobs in Rocky Hill increased significantly from about 1,730 jobs in 1960 to about 10,200 jobs in 1990 and 13,359 jobs in 2010. While economic growth is expected to continue, the rate of growth is expected to slow from prior levels. Due to recent economic conditions, there was a slight decrease in the number of jobs in Rocky Hill compared to the year 2000.

Jobs In Rocky Hill

|      |        |
|------|--------|
| 1960 | 1,729  |
| 1970 | 3,467  |
| 1980 | 5,500  |
| 1990 | 10,200 |
| 2000 | 13,460 |
| 2010 | 13,359 |

CT Labor Dept.

Rocky Hill is very fortunate to have a very strong tax base where local services are supported by tax revenue from local businesses.



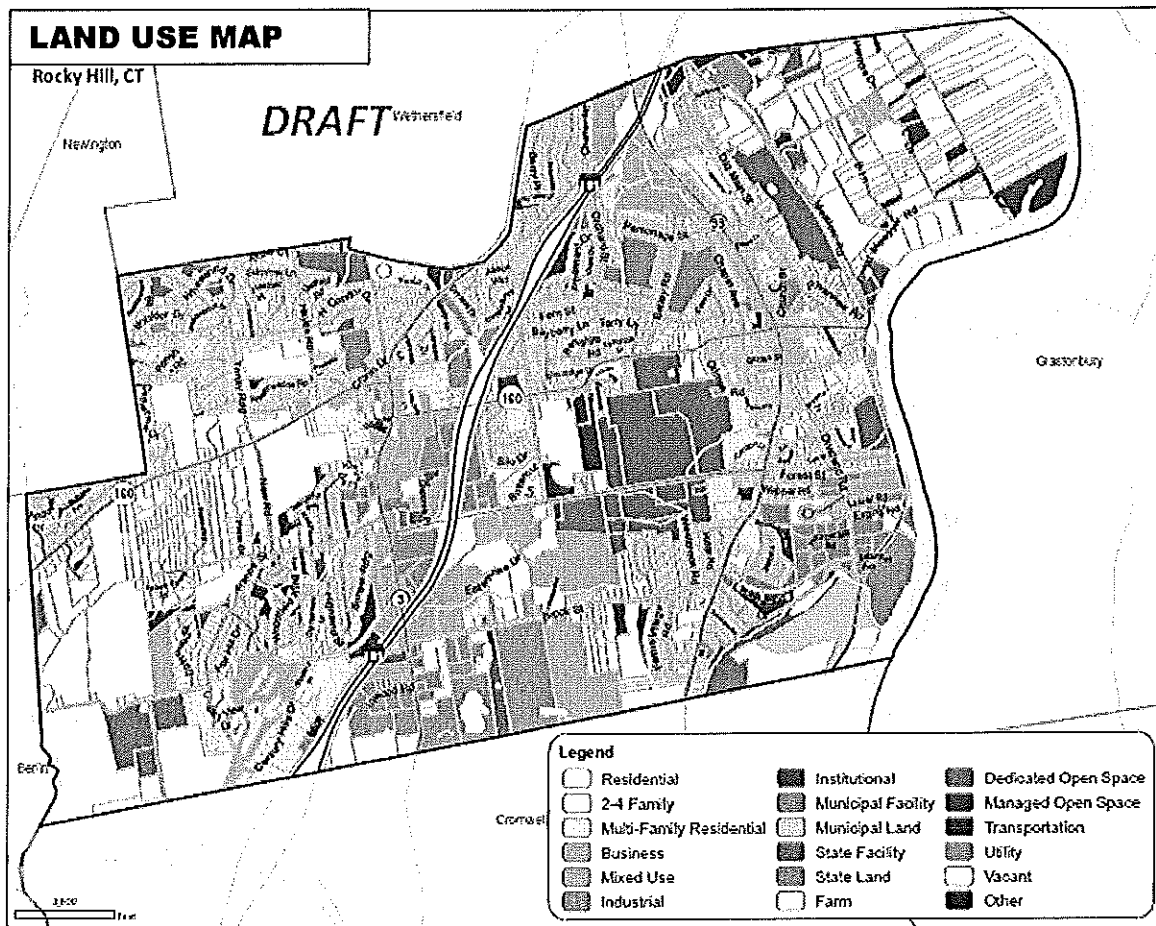
*... and a strong economy and tax base.*

## Land Use In Rocky Hill

Rocky Hill contains approximately 8,900 acres of land.

In the 2001 POCD, the land use survey found that about 65 percent of the community (5,744 acres) was occupied for residential, commercial, or institutional use or was dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space. Conversely, about 35 percent of the land in town (3,151 acres) was vacant or uncommitted to a specific use.

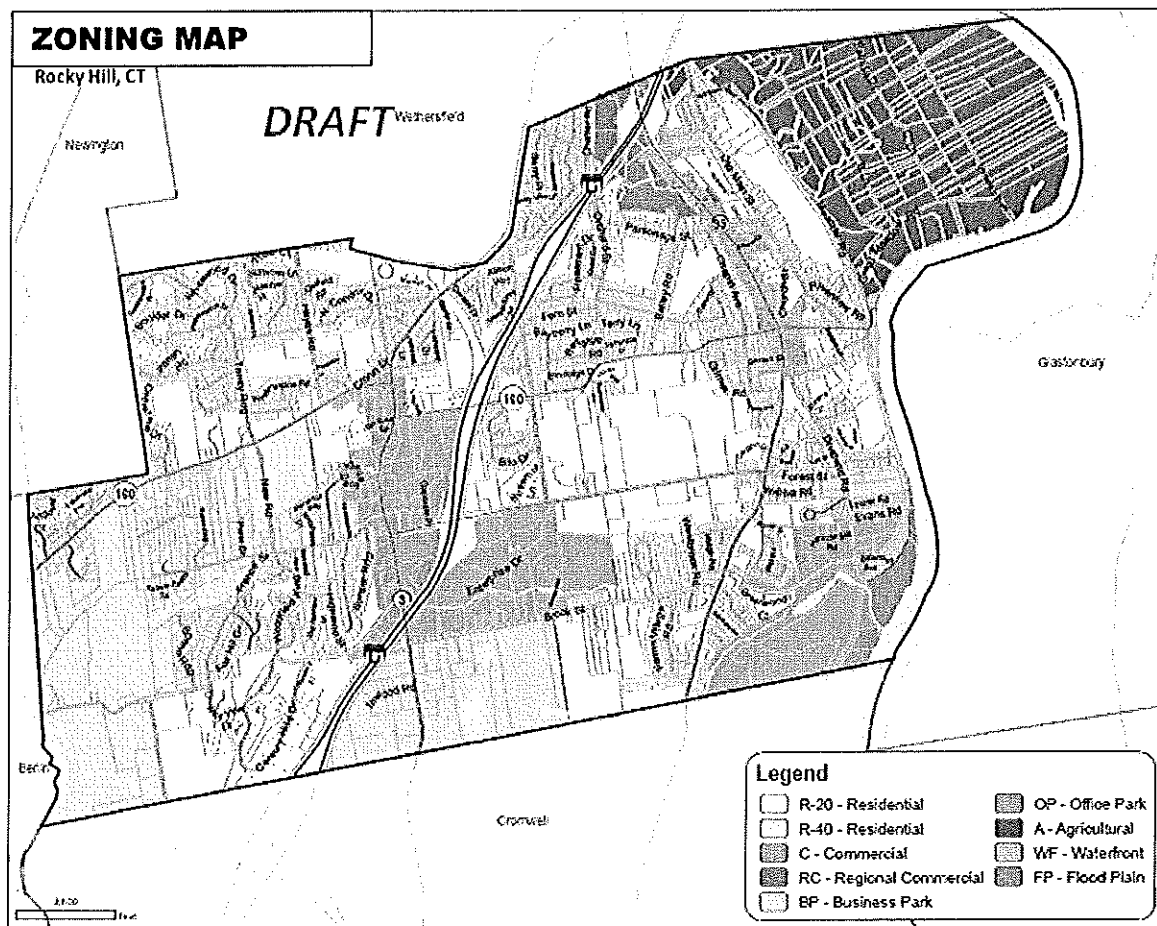
Similar data about how land is being used in 2014 will be compiled as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).



## Zoning In Rocky Hill

In the 2001 POCD, about 64 percent of the community was zoned for residential use, about 17 percent was zoned for business use, and the remaining 19 percent was zoned for floodplain use or was contained within road rights-of way.

Similar data about how land is zoned in 2014 will be compiled as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).



## Summary of Conditions & Trends

The basic findings from the 2001 Plan of Conservation and Development remain valid:

- Rocky Hill is expected to experience population, housing and economic growth in the future due to the community's location and characteristics.
- Changes can be expected in the age composition of Rocky Hill and this will change the demand for local services and the types of housing units that people will desire.
- Given that Rocky Hill seems to attract a number of young adults and "empty nesters" with disposable income, there may be a unique opportunity to create an environment based on hospitality, mixed uses and entertainment.
- At this time, it seems that the key issues to address as part of the Plan are how to manage this anticipated future development (and possible redevelopment of existing areas) to meet community needs, preserve community character, and enhance the overall quality of life.

## Notes & Comments

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**Planimetrics**

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